

Amendments to the Claims

1 Claim 1 (currently amended): A computer-implemented method of managing user information in
2 an instant messaging (“IM”) system, comprising:

3 using a data structure to record IM activity on behalf of a particular user of the IM system,
4 wherein:

5 the data structure comprises a plurality of entries, each of the entries
6 corresponding to a selected one of a plurality of other IM users remembered, by the IM system,
7 on behalf of an IM client of the particular user;

8 each of the entries comprises: an identifier of the selected one of the plurality of
9 remembered IM users to which the entry corresponds; a first date indicating when the particular
10 user last sent an instant message to the selected one; a first time period indicating a first inactivity
11 period allowed before the particular [[one]] user wants the selected one to be treated as expired,
12 the first inactivity period corresponding to inactivity on outbound instant messages sent from the
13 particular [[one]] user to the selected one; a second date indicating when the particular user last
14 received an instant message from the selected one; a second time period indicating a second
15 inactivity period allowed before the particular [[one]] user wants the selected one to be treated as
16 expired, the second inactivity period corresponding to inactivity on inbound instant messages
17 received by the particular [[one]] user from the selected one; and a current expiration status of the
18 selected one; and

19 the first time period in at least one of the entries is different from the second time
20 period in that one of the entries;

21 upon sending an instant message from the particular [[one]] user to any of the plurality of

remembered IM users, automatically updating the first date in the entry corresponding to that remembered IM user to a current date and setting the current expiration status in the entry to indicate that the corresponding one of the remembered users is not yet expired;

upon receiving an instant message by the particular one user from any of the plurality of remembered IM users, automatically updating the second date in the entry corresponding to that remembered IM user to the current date and setting the current expiration status in the entry to indicate that the corresponding one of the remembered users is not yet expired;

periodically evaluating the entries in the data structure to determine, for the IM client of the particular user, whether any of the plurality of remembered users should be treated as expired, further comprising, for each of the entries for which the current expiration status indicates that the corresponding one of the remembered users is not yet expired:

adding the first time period from the entry to the first date from the entry, thereby computing an outbound inactivity comparison date;

adding the second time period from the entry to the second date from the entry, thereby computing an inbound inactivity comparison date;

selecting a first-occurring one of the outbound inactivity comparison date and the inbound inactivity comparison date; and

setting the current expiration status in the entry to indicate that the corresponding one of the remembered users is to be treated as expired if the selected first-occurring one is prior to the current date; and

for each one of the plurality of remembered users for whom the current expiration status of the corresponding entry in the data structure indicates that that one of the remembered users is

44 to be treated as expired, omitting this user when performing IM presence management functions
45 of the IM system but not deleting this one of the remembered users from the plurality of users
46 remembered by the IM system on behalf of the IM client.

Claim 2 (canceled)

1 Claim 3 (previously presented): The computer-implemented method according to Claim 1,
2 wherein:

3 the first time period and the second time period are selected by the particular user;
4 the first time period is different among at least two of the entries; and
5 the second time period is different among at least two of the entries.

Claims 4 - 7 (canceled)

1 Claim 8 (previously presented): The computer-implemented method according to Claim 1,
2 further comprising enabling the particular user to specify that one of the plurality of remembered
3 users will be immediately treated as expired and in response, automatically setting the current
4 expiration status in the entry corresponding to that one of the remembered users to indicate that
5 the corresponding one is to be treated as expired.

Claims 9 - 46 (canceled)